



# ***WORKFIRST FULL-TIME TRAINING OPTIONS***

*New Tools in the Job Search Toolkit*

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# WorkFirst Full-Time Training Options

## *Full-Time Training Offered to Job Search Participants*

There are two types of full-time training offered to job search participants. This training helps participants move to a job, a better job, and a better life and can help us meet WorkFirst goals of better wages and fewer TANF returns.

### **Pre-employment Training**

Pre-employment Training is a one-time, full-time training opportunity to enter training program lasting up to 22 weeks that is customized for specific employers. This training is developed locally by community and technical colleges in partnership with employers and partner agencies.

To qualify, a participant must be able to enter training within 30 days of referral and willing to accept any resulting job offers. Participants can only enter this training once (unless they qualify for an exception to this policy due to unforeseen circumstances).

*Changes to Pre-employment Training policy include : 1) requiring participants to make this training part of their Success Plans; 2) requiring them to enter training within 30 days and; 3) making it a one-time training opportunity.*

### **High-Wage/High-Demand Training Options**

There are two types of High-Wage/High-Demand (HWHD) full-time training options for TANF recipients to complete a certificate or degree that will lead to employment in a high-wage, high-demand occupation.

- **Information Technology & Health Care:** This option allows participants to start and finish a one-year community or technical college training program in the information technology or health care fields. The list of courses that can be approved under this option are listed in Attachment A.
- **Certificate/Degree Completion:** This option allows participants to finish up the last year of a two- or four-year certificate or degree in a high-wage, high-demand field on an exception basis. The high-wage/high-demand criteria for this option is based on median income and high-demand occupations within the local labor market.

### **Requirements for both types of HWHD training**

For both types of HWHD training, the training can be approved one-time only (barring an approved exception to policy) There is no work requirement for either option for the 12 months of training time.

To qualify for either type of HWHD training, a participant must also:

1. Meet all of the pre-requisites for the course.
2. Obtain the certificate or degree within 12 calendar months.
3. Participate full-time in the training program and make satisfactory progress.
4. Work with co-located ESD staff during the last quarter of training for job placement.
5. Return to job search once s/he completes the educational program if still unemployed.

*These are new training options that must be approved in a participant's Success Plan and IRP. A new JAS component code, HW, is used for both types of training. See Attachment D for a copy of the emergency WAC adoption to implement HWHD training.*

# Success Plans

## *Exploring Work & Training Options*

DSHS case managers refer the following participants to job search: 1) able to look for work, 2) working and still on TANF, 3) returning to TANF. During the job search period, ESD staff make sure participants create a customized Success Plan that can include work, training, or both.

### **Success Plans**

A Success Plan is a participant's personal action plan to reach her or his longer-term employment goals. The job service specialist or a job success coach works with job search participants to create this plan using:

1. An evaluation of the participant's individual skills, interests, and abilities.
2. Local labor market information related to the participant's longer-term employment goals.
3. Referrals to better jobs or for training that can lead to higher wages or a better job.

### **Training Worksheets**

JAS system changes have been made to connect a single Training Worksheet to a participant's Success Plan. Both of these documents are viewable in e-JAS. This will make it easier for DSHS, ESD, and college staff to communicate and coordinate when a participant plans to move from job search to training to work.

We are adding training to Success Plans for another reason as well. We have always added approved training to a participant's Individual Responsibility Plan as part of their contract to meet program requirements and move off TANF. The Success Plan has a different function – it focuses the participant on how to get a better job and continues to guide their career progress after they leave TANF. Training has an important role to play and belongs in both documents – whether the focus is using time on TANF effectively (the IRP) or job retention and continued post-TANF wage gains (the Success Plan).

See Attachment B, a sample Success Plan.

# Step-by-Step Guide

## *Referring Participants From Job Search to Full-Time Training*

Below we describe the process for informing participants of full-time training options during job search and getting full-time training approved.

### **Step One: Referrals (RI)**

The case manager uses the current referral process to refer all participants who are able to look for work to job search (RI).

### **Step Two: Exploring Work & Training Options at Job Search (JI/JS/RZ)**

The job service specialist:

- Enters participants into a job search component (JI or JS);
- Coordinates with college staff to make sure that within five days the participant learns about pre-employment and high-wage, high-demand training options;
- Completes the Success Plan; and
- Refers participants who request training to the college and documents and tracks these training requests in JAS (RZ).

*RZ is a new referral code in JAS for referrals from job search to full-time training.*

### **Step Three: Getting Approved Training into Success Plans**

College staff follows through on training requests within two weeks. They approve appropriate pre-employment or high-wage, high-demand training, create a training plan, and send it to the job service specialist and the case manager.

*Planned system changes will allow colleges to send the training plan electronically as an addendum to the participant's Success Plan.*

### **Step Four: IRP & JAS Updates**

After getting an approved training plan, the case manager updates the participant's IRP. The job service specialist enters approved pre-employment (PE) or high-wage, high-demand (HW) training components into JAS and authorizes needed support services within available funding.

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College staff will work with all participants in approved training, as follows:

- Maintain quarterly contact with the participant to monitor progress in school.
- Notify case manager if the participant is not maintaining satisfactory progress so the Individual Responsibility Plan can be revised, as needed.
- Connect the participant with ESD co-located staff for job placement before the end of training.

*See Attachment C, Pre-employment Training and HWHD Training At a Glance, for a participant flow chart*

# Questions & Answers

## *More Information About Training Options*

### **Why are we creating the HWHD training option?**

We are adding an option that may be the best route to self-sufficiency for a small group of participants – those who can meet the college pre-requisites to enroll in one of a specific group of occupational certificates or degrees. We expect participants who earn these certificates or degrees will qualify for stable jobs in high-demand fields and will be able to leave TANF for better wages and job benefits than they could obtain otherwise.

### **What if approved training won't start right away?**

**Pre-employment training** must start within 30 days of the referral. During that 30 days, participants can go directly into other educational components to prepare for pre-employment training until classes begin.

**High-Wage/High-Demand training** must start by the beginning of the next school quarter (and the participant can go into other educational components in the interim). If a participant needs to wait longer for the classes to begin, s/he must go directly to job search and secure part-time or full-time employment.

### **How will colleges approve HWHD training?**

**HWHD #1: Information Technology & Health Care:** WorkFirst college coordinators can approve any of the information technology or health care training programs listed under their college in Attachment A if the participant meets all the other conditions (like meeting course pre-requisites).

**HWHD #2: Degree Completion:** WorkFirst college coordinators will need to follow a longer process for participant degree completion requests. For this option, college coordinators will:

1. Screen referrals to make sure the participant meets basic requirements (enrolled or accepted to admittance to the training, is making satisfactory progress, and can complete the certificate or degree within 12 months).
2. Screen the training program using the LMEA Skills Gap Analyzer at <http://www.wilma.org/skillsgap> for their local labor market to determine if the degree is likely to lead directly to a high-wage job, using the following high-wage, high-demand criteria:
  - **High-wage:** For Seattle-King County, the job must pay \$14.00 an hour or more. The high-wage rate for the rest of the state is \$12.00 an hour or more.
  - **High-demand:** The job must be high or very high demand and low or very low competition.
3. Send viable requests to Kelly Holmes of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges at [kholmes@sbctc.ctc.edu](mailto:kholmes@sbctc.ctc.edu).

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4. Kelly will get a final decision within two weeks and forward it to the WorkFirst college coordinator. The college coordinator will notify partners if the requested training is approved.

### **Who covers HWHD tuition costs?**

The Information Technology/Health Care HWHD training programs are provided by community and technical colleges and paid for with tuition assistance funds.

For certificate/degree completion, tuition assistance pays for training provided by community and technical colleges and paid for with Work-Based Tuition Assistance funds. Work-Based Tuition Assistance will also cover tuition costs for certificates or degrees that are completed at a community or technical college.

### **Who qualifies for childcare assistance?**

TANF recipients in approved pre-employment or high-wage/high-demand training qualify for childcare assistance through the Working Connections Child Care program once it is added to the participant's IRP.

### **How will we track cases and measure results?**

The WorkFirst Operational Report will include two new measures -- one for pre-employment training and the other for HWHD training. You will be able to get more details by referring to data dictionary in the upcoming Operational Strategies Report. To describe the measures in a general way, they will measure a three-step process:

1. Number and percentage of participants moving from job search entry to pre-employment and HWHD training;
2. Number and percentage of pre-employment and HWHD training participants placed/employed within 60 days of the end of training; and,
3. How many pre-employment and HWHD training participant exit TANF within 90 days of the job placement date.

*College staff is also developing a real-time measure that will show which pre-employment training courses are available in each local area. This measure will go on to track how many participants are referred, enrolled, and complete the course. Target date for this report to go online is July 2001.*

# Attachment A

## *Information Technology & Health Care HWHD List*

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**Attachment B**

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*Sample Success Plan*

# Attachment C

*Pre-employment & HWHD Training at a Glance*

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Attachment D

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*Changes to WAC 388-310-0600*

On July 2, 2001, the department made the following changes to WAC 388-310-0600, WorkFirst – Job Search by emergency adoption. The department has also started to make this change to WAC through the regular WAC adoption process.

**WAC 388-310-0600 WorkFirst--Job search.**

**(1) What is job search?**

Job search is an opportunity to learn and use skills you need to find and keep a job. Job search may include:

- (a) Classroom instruction; and/or
- (b) Structured job search that helps you find job openings, complete applications, practice interviews and apply other skills and abilities with a job search specialist or a group of fellow job-seekers; and/or
- (c) Pre-employment training; and/or
- (d) High wage, high demand training.

**(2) What is pre-employment training?**

Pre-employment training helps you learn skills you need for an identified entry level job that pays more than average entry level wages.

(a) Pre-employment training is an acceptable job search activity when an employer or industry commits to hiring or giving hiring preference to WorkFirst participants who successfully complete pre-employment training.

(b) You can find out about current pre-employment training opportunities by asking your job service specialist, your case manager or staff at your local community and technical college.

**(3) What is high wage, high demand training?**

There are two types of High-Wage/High-Demand (HWHD) full-time training options for TANF recipients to complete a certificate or degree that will lead to employment in a high-wage, high-demand occupation.

(a) Information Technology & Health Care: This option allows participants to start and finish a one-year community or technical college training program in the information technology or health care fields; and/or

(b) Certificate/Degree Completion: This option allows participants to finish up the last year of a two- or four-year certificate or degree in a high-wage, high-demand field on an exception basis. The high-wage/high-demand criteria for this option is based on median income and high-demand occupations within the local labor market as determined by Employment Security Department.

c) For both types of HWHD training, the training can be approved one-time only (barring an approved exception to policy). There is no work requirement with either option for the 12 months of training time.

(d) To qualify for HWHD training, a participant must also:

- (i) Meet all of the pre-requisites for the course;
- (ii) Obtain the certificate or degree within 12 calendar months;
- (iii) Participate full-time in the training program and make satisfactory progress;
- (iv) Work with co-located ESD staff during the last quarter of training for job placement; and
- (v) Return to job search once s/he completes the educational program if still unemployed.